



fact sheet

Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman*

Georgia's Long-Term Care Ombudsmen (LTCOs) are specialized ombudsmen who:

- Investigate and work to resolve problems or complaints affecting residents of Georgia's long-term care facilities – nursing homes; personal care homes (PCHs), often called assisted living facilities; and community living arrangements (CLAs).
- Identify problem areas and advocate for change.
- Provide information, including advice to wisely select a facility.
- Promote resident, family, and community involvement.
- Educate the community about the needs of residents.
- Coordinate efforts with others concerned with long-term care.
- Visit facilities routinely to talk to residents and monitor conditions.
- Educate facility staff about residents' rights and other issues.

The Office of the State LTCO contracts with community programs affiliated with Area Agencies on Aging. LTCOs complete extensive training to become authorized to resolve complaints with and on behalf of residents. Approximately 60 certified LTCOs in Georgia – both staff and volunteers – address concerns that include long-term care services, facilities' physical environments, residents' rights, and discharges, among others. Some volunteers (about 40) regularly visit residents and other volunteers (about 65) assist the programs in other ways.

The SFY 2007 budget was \$2,946,940 (\$1,281,852 federal, \$1,284,940 state, and \$380,148 local). LTCOs served 2,840 individuals through complaint investigation, handling 4,676 complaints for nursing home residents, 15 for ICF/MR facility residents, 1,212 for residents of PCHs, and 44 for those in CLAs. Thirty percent of complaints involved quality of life issues; 28 percent, residents' rights; 28 percent, resident care; 8 percent, outside agency concerns; and 6 percent, administration.

The State Ombudsman served as Patient Care Ombudsman in two federal bankruptcy actions, one involving the nation's first multi-state bankruptcy related to long-term care facilities under the new federal statute. Ombudsmen have made numerous visits to all of the facilities to observe conditions, advocate for the residents, and provide information to the federal court.

The Office of the State Ombudsman together with the Planning and Evaluation Section of the Division, completed our first customer satisfaction survey. Findings included: 94% of respondents were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the individual Ombudsman; 90% felt the Ombudsman Program was "very helpful" or "helpful" to them; and 94% indicated they would use the services again or recommend the program to others.

*"Ombudsman" is a Swedish word meaning "citizen representative."

The ombudsmen – together with members of the local Nursing Home Relocation Team – participated in resident relocation efforts at two area nursing facilities, ensuring the safe transfer of residents. Ombudsmen from the Northwest Georgia ombudsman program advocated for the rights of the residents and provided technical assistance to other agencies and facility staff.

Ombudsmen helped promote the Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes campaign among residents, families, facility staff, and the general public.

For more information, visit www.georgiaombudsman.org, contact your community program, or call the Office of the State LTCO at 888-454-LTCO (5826).

Georgia Department of Human Resources
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